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First to Last—the Truth: News—Editorials —Advertisements

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The Third Day of the Battle

The third day of the present German offensive sees the enemy making slow but material progress down the Valley of the Oise, less marked progress westward between Montdidier and the river, and practically no progress due south of Montdidier on what is becoming the extreme flank of his new thrust. His objective as it discloses itself would seem to be to turn the French out of the rough country on the southeast bank of the Oise River below Noyon. Here the French hold the Forest of Ourscamps—an admirable defensive position and the cornerstone of their whole front from Montdidier to Château Thierry.

Along the Valley of the Oise the Germans seem now to have advanced between six and seven miles and to have reached Ribécourt, which was inside the old French position during all the trench warfare from September, 1914, to the German retreat in March, 1917. This is a real advance; it represents the gain of strong defensive positions and it would seem to carry with it a grave threat to the position of the French centre in the Forest of Ourscamps. In a word, although the German advance is less than a quarter of what it was at the Aisne in the same time, it has already begun to threaten the French centre, and this unquestionably was the first purpose of the new German attack.

When we consider the circumstances of the present German attack as compared with those of the three earlier drives it becomes clear at once that we are dealing not with a surprise attack but with an expected attack. The parallel is rather with Verdun in its later phases than with anything that has happened in the present year. The result has been an immediate and enormous multiplication of German casualties and an absence of that collapse of Allied units which was the most distressing feature both in March and in May.

It has always been clear that if the Germans meant to resume their drive toward Paris they would have at some time to make an attack upon the west bank of the Oise between Montdidier and Noyon, and there is no question that the French had massed reserves sufficiently near this threatened front to be able to intervene with small delay. When the Germans attacked in Picardy and in Champagne, having submerged the divisions holding the first line, they were able to go forward for a certain number of days before Foch could bring in new troops to check them. In the present case there was no submerging of the front line, and Allied reserves unquestionably began to intervene as early as the second day—that is, on Monday.

We are, then, seeing a battle between two concentrated armies for the first time this year. Hitherto the Germans have broken off engagements as soon as the Allied reserves had arrived in front of them. Now, despite the arrival of the Allied reserves, they are endeavoring to pound their way forward, exactly as they sought to pound their way forward on the Douaumont and Vaux plateaux about Verdun two years ago.

If one has the Verdun topography in mind a simple parallel can be pointed out. At Verdun, after their first drive, the Germans sought by alternating blows, first on the right flank about Deadman's Hill and second on the left about Fort de Vaux, to push forward until the French centre south of Douaumont became untenable. To-day, on a vastly larger scale, the Germans are repeating the familiar tactics described in all contemporary accounts as "using the pincers."

Actually, attacking first between the Aisne and the Marne and then between the Oise and Montdidier, the Germans are attempting to advance on the flanks and and compel the French to quit all the advantagous ground held by their centre in the forests of Ourscamps and of Compiègne. If the enemy can accomplish this purpose the French will be obliged to stand much nearer Paris and on ground infinitely more favorable to the enemy.

Because the French were expecting the blow and had reserves ready, the Germans have been unable to leap forward as they did toward Amiens and toward the Marne. Since the French reserves immediately available have been sufficient to slow down the German onset at once we may expect the battle lines to stabilize themselves much sooner and the necessary additional French reserves to arrive in time to prevent any disaster such as that of March 21. On the other hand, since the Germans are using vastly superior numbers at the cost of enormous casualties, it is to be expected that there will be other recessions along the Allied front. These recessions are regrettable mainly because the distance between Paris and the front is short and each German advance brings the French nearer to the point where they must make a final stand to cover the city.

It is a mistake to draw too general conclusions from the present conflict, which is still in its first phase. We are told that the Germans have used some thirty divisions. In that case they must have used nearly half of the striking power left to them after the Aisne offensive, if Allied estimates were correct. But German losses in the Aisne offensive were relatively small and divisions used there could probably return promptly to the firing line.

The interesting thing at the moment is that there seems to be a general clarifying of German purpose and the revelation of a settled determination to concentrate the final effort of the present campaign upon an advance against Paris. Unless all signs fail, we are to look for alternating blows, now east, now west, seeking to open the northern roads to Paris and the northeastern roads to Paris, the former defended by the front between Montdidier and the Oise, the latter by the new front between the Aisne and the Marne. As this German purpose becomes more and more unmistakable the Allies will be more and more able to make their counter concentration, and, as in the present operation, the element of surprise will disappear and the cost to Germany in casualties increase proportionately.

As at Verdun, the main purpose of the Allies remains to hold the Germans within restricted limits and impose upon them the maximum of casualties while America is getting ready, as Britain was getting ready in the first months of 1916. It is too early to put much emphasis upon the analogy between the Verdun and Paris operations, but the similarity is becoming striking and there is reason for confidence in the resemblance.

The Question of Age

There still occasionally reaches us a protest by a woman against the necessity of stating her age in order to vote. The last protest was from a professional woman who felt that her age was her own secret and that to give it away might handicap her in her work.

There are two answers to this resentment and revolt. The first is that the objectors are mistaken in their facts and needlessly worried. Henceforward in New York State no elector, male or female, will have to state his or her exact age when "over thirty." Such was the tender act of our benign Legislature last winter, although the news of it seems to have escaped many eyes. There was some confusion surrounding the recent special enrolment for women because the new provision respecting voters "over thirty" did not in terms apply to this specific enrolment. But there can be no question in future enrolments or future registrations. And "over thirty" ought surely to satisfy the most secretive elector or electress of however certain or uncertain an age.

The second answer, if another is wanted, is that the protestants are mistaken in their argument. Men have had to state their exact age in order to vote and no irreparable damage to professional standing has been suggested. There may be an occasional case of annoyance or slight injury. But the record has been regarded as a valuable aid against fraudulent voting, and casual damage to the individual had to be endured for the general good. A few male cranks always kicked against the provision, to the irritation and inconvenience of election boards. But the law prevailed without any considerable objections.

Now the Legisiature has compromised at the age of thirty in the supposed interest of peace in the family. Probably the remaining provisions of the election law are sufficient to forestall fraud. Certainly no very considerable body of either men or women has been greatly gratified. There should be far more women to resent this special coddling than to approve it.

Disgraceful Delay

The situation which has resulted in the strike of subway workers and the cessation of new subway construction is no new thing. It was foreseen months ago by the Public Service Commission and the contractors. In an endeavor to meet it a bill was introduced at Albany, was thoroughly considered, was passed, was accepted by Mayor Hylan on behalf of the city, though previously he had protested against it, and became law.

Now the Mayor and the Controller refuse to work under the terms of that law to continue subway construction. The contractors can do nothing. If they grant the wages the men demand they will go into bankruptcy, and a bankrupt contractor can't build subways. The Public Service Commission can do no more than it has done. It has taken the necessary preliminary steps for a revision of the contracts to permit the payment of higher wages, in compliance with the provisions of the law. To enable the contractors to get the men back at work the Board of Estimate and Apportionment must approve that revision of the contracts. But, instead of acting under the law which the Mayor himself signed, the board devised a new plan which the contractors say would operate inequitably and would be the certain cause of delay and litigation. Therefore they have refused to accept it.

Mayor Hylan's determined effort is to make blame for the delay stick to the Public Service Commission. It is a futile effort. The blame rests, and must rest, on the Mayor himself, and in lesser degree on the members of the Board of Estimate who stand with him. When the law provides a way of meeting a given problem it becomes the duty of officials to carry out the law. The Mayor's refusal to do this is incomprehensible. Every day the strike continues the city loses thousands of dollars in interest charges on the unfinished work. Every day the subways are delayed the travelling public is put to vast inconvenience and discomfort.

The present situation is a disgrace and little short of a scandal. When the Board of Estimate meets on Friday the matter should be pressed to an issue, and the other members should unite to settle it by outvoting the Mayor and Controller if they persist in their present stand.

A Zoological Feat

Mr. Hearst's cleaning up is a fascinating zoological performance. First, he swallowed the war. That was done finally with one mighty effort in the form of a full-page editorial, three days after "The New York American" had deleted the prayer for victory from the President's Memorial Day proclamation. Lesser things have followed, though some of them no doubt have been quite as bitter and unpalatable. He has swallowed his hatred of England. He is evidently preparing to swallow the Japanese bogey. Yesterday morning he swallowed Hog Island. Elsewhere in this paper we contrast in parallel columns his fulsome appreciation of the shipbuilding programme with the scurrilous attack he made upon the Hog Island enterprise when lynching the reputations of people engaged in war preparations was still a safe and effective form of disloyal propaganda. If what he now says about the shipbuilders is true, the most elemental decency would require him to make direct amends; instead, he merely covers the whole subject with the slime of an insincere, unwelcome praise. There is yet Mexico. What will he do with that? The act of deglutition is muscular, and, therefore, capable of endless repetition, but the largest stomach has a limited stretch, and none of these things digest. They will all come up again.

Burying the Hatchet

In his speech to the Mexican editors President Wilson resorted to heroic diplomacy. He buried his Mexican policy of 1913-'17. He wrote no epitaph for it, unless these two sentences, which speak for themselves, were intended to serve for one:

> My own policy and the policy of my Administration toward Mexico was based at every point upon this principle: that the internal settlement of the affairs of Mexico was none of our business; that we had no right to interfere with or dictate to Mexico in any particular with regard to her own affairs. . . .
>
> When we sent our troops into Mexico our sincere desire was nothing else than to assist you to get rid of the man who was making the settlement of your affairs for the time being impossible.

Our misunderstandings with Mexico in the last four years have been largely psychological. Mexicans couldn't comprehend our policy toward them. They were hardly to blame for that. Few Americans comprehended it. We had wars with Mexico which were not wars. We had peace with Mexico when there was no peace. Huerta was boycotted and driven out of office, in spite of the conviction lurking somewhere in the back of our minds that "the internal settlement of the affairs of Mexico was none of our business." And we did many other things which were plainly not in accord with that conviction.

Mexican distrust was keenly aroused by the mysterious complexities of our diplomacy. The way to allay it now is not to continue to argue about the rights and wrongs of the past, but to consign those rights and wrongs to oblivion. We must wipe the 1913-'17 slate clean and try to work back to the happier relations of sympathy and friendship which existed from the Presidency of Juarez down to the closing days of the Diaz régime.

Mexico and the United States were the best of neighbors for fifty years. There is no good reason why the old feeling of neighborly confidence should not be revived. There is no conflict of political or economic interest between the two nations. Mexican prosperity works for our advantage. Our natural policy is to help Mexico to work out her future. The only things which stand in the way of that policy are the animosities created by the misunderstandings and frictions of the recent years.

These infelicities have been seized on by Germany for purposes of anti-American propaganda among the Mexicans. A certain pro-German sentiment has been fomented in Mexico. It is purely artificial in character, since Germany and Mexico have no natural and permanent common interest. It can be met and overcome by a clear manifestation on the part of our government of that old cordiality of feeling which from the days of Maximilian on had been hardening into a national tradition.

President Wilson has shown the way. Let us sink unessential differences, forget tactless injuries and resume the cordial friendship of the past.

Take Up Another Notch

(From the Chicago Evening Post)

Baron Rhondda, the British Food Controller, who nearly starved himself to death by extreme application of his own rules, has been made a viscount. We hope the honor may comfort him. But, logically, he should have been a belted earl—a very tightly belted earl.

The Flag

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: On the 14th day of June, 1777, and 141 years ago on that day of the present month, the Colonial Congress decreed the emblem now known the world over as the American flag. Each and every member of the Grand Army of the Republic hopes to see that day honored the coming anniversary as never before. While the flag has ever stood for the best that there is in this "land of the free and the home of the brave," let us all realize that this year it stands as the emblem of hope for the entire civilized world, that it stands for more than ever flag has meant before in the history of the world.

While loyal Americans need but little urging to do their full duty in this direction, let us all turn our attention to the foreigner in our midst and see that he or she shall have some idea of what the flag really means to us. Education in this respect has been neglected. Let all industrial plants set aside at least one hour on that day for respect and honor of our symbol of liberty and equality. As ever and always, the Grand Army turns to the teachers in the public schools, and suggests that they hold special exercises fitted to the day and the subject. Let them strive to see that every little foreign born pupil has a flag and realizes something of its glory and history. To do this with the element named, and especially the adult worker, requires tact, sympathy and an intense love for our flag, as well as a deep desire to aid those who realize so little of what our emblem really means to the loyal American. But love overcometh all things, and in this spirit let us all go about the blessed work set before us. I quote from The Tribune of June 2:

> "The Bethlehem Steel Company has about 20,000 employes. A recent census showed 10,266 were foreign born, representing fifty-eight nationalities. Only 5.2 per cent had become citizens of the United States; 10.3 per cent had their first papers, and 25.1 per cent had taken no steps toward citizenship.
>
> "The record showed 55.4 per cent (5,689) had told investigators they most emphatically did not want to become American citizens. They feared draft into the army if they took out first papers. The older men feared their money would be taken from them.
>
> "'Who told you these things?' they were asked.
>
> "'Oh, we hear 'em everywhere. It's whispered about.'
>
> "Investigation convinced the steel men a definite campaign was being fostered among their employes by German agents."

Now, who is to blame for this state of things, the illiterate and ignorant foreigner or you and I?

If it can be possible that you haven't a flag, get one. If you have never flung it out where the sun could caress it, do it on that day and ever after. If you do not regard our flag with a feeling close akin to adoration, read its glorious history and realize what it does mean to an American and to all the nations of the earth in this trying hour, and thus rectify your spiritual condition, so that you may feel that it stands for "government of the people, by the people and for the people," not only for this day, but for all the days while the children of men may live and love liberty.

C. J. GREENLEAF,
Dept. Patriotic Instructor, G. A. R.
New York, June 8, 1918.

Anti-Ette

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: It was an unpleasant surprise to find in The Tribune, which has been a stanch supporter of the movement for the enfranchisement of women, the term "conductorette" applied to women in the street-car service. May one ask why the belittling and sneering suffix "ette" should be applied to women engaged in any activity not formerly customary? It is well known that the term "suffragette" originated with London hoodlums, and that its use to designate advocates of woman suffrage is a mark of gross ignorance or inexcusably bad manners. Nor is there any better excuse for such words as "farmerette."

The women who are measuring up to the needs of the country in these critical days by assuming new, and in some cases difficult, functions deserve something better than to be referred to by language which conveys an impression of triviality. Cannot these miserable "ette" words be banished from the reputable press, save when applied to that which is actually diminutive or contemptible? The activities of the women of the country are as dignified and honorable as those of its men, and no self-respecting citizen should be guilty of any phraseology capable of a contrary interpretation. JAMES F. MORTON, JR.
New York, June 6, 1918.

"Go, Tell It—"

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The next time the Kaiser sets a date for that long-postponed dinner in Paris we can say to him, "Go, tell it to the marines." YANKEE.
New York, June 8, 1918.

The Worst Yet to Come

(From The Columbia Record)

Mme. Botchkareva, who commanded Russia's famous Death Legion, is in the United States. Madame escaped the Huns, she escaped the Bolsheviki, she escaped the Red Guard, she escaped the Socialists and she escaped the anarchists. We hope she escapes the vaudeville managers.

The Sergeant Speaks at the High School

SEE banners red and blue
Hung high on either hand,
To greet a boy in brown
Come home from Hero Land.

Hear old walls echoing
New stories of the brave;
Look yonder as he speaks
On trench and hill and grave.

The struggle over seas,
How near at last it comes.
No plaudits greet his words,
Save now the roll of drums.

But boys and girls that hear
This tale of valiant men,
Of gallant life and death,
Shall in their hearts again

How often hear the voice
That thrills this old gray place,
And see that boy in brown
With the bright scar on his face!

ANNE W. YOUNG.

NOW IF WE COULD ONLY INOCULATE THE HOME FOLKS WITH IT!

Coiled in the Flag—Hears-s-st

Swallowing Hog Island

From an Editorial in The American of Feb. 20

WE HAVE a few plain words to say about this Hog Island scandal.

First, let us make plain the facts.

The Emergency Fleet Corporation, which is only another name for the government, made a contract with a hastily organized corporation, calling itself the American International Corporation, to build a huge shipyard at Hog Island—a sweet name that has turned out to be charmingly descriptive.

The American International Corporation has as directors and stockholders—

Frank A. Vanderlip * * *
Robert S. Lovett * * *
Percy A. Rockefeller * * *
J. Ogden Armour * * *
Robert Dollar * * *

The contract which these eminent patriots made with the government was sweet simplicity itself.

The government was to provide them with all the money needed to build the Hog Island shipyard AND THE SHIPS, and the government was to take over the product of the loan as full payment and allow these self-sacrificing patriots a private profit estimated at six million dollars.

The American International Corporation then promptly sublet the building of the shipyard and ships to another corporation organized for that purpose, which is called the American International Shipbuilding Company—the net result of all this scheming being to put a prospective profit of six million dollars into the pockets of these "patriots," who had not invested a dollar of their own money and who were not called upon to use their time or their credit or to take the risk of losing so much as a copper cent!

. . . . . .

How do these profiteering rogues endanger the nation's cause?

Why, because every time the mass of the people see a rich profiteer piling up his already unreasonably great riches, and doing that at the expense of common folk's sacrifices, feelings of resentment and of distrust and of discouragement swell in their hearts.

And if these feelings are increased in intensity by seeing rascally profiteers escape with their wicked gains from any punishment, then enthusiasm for the war will die, and the people will refuse to make the sacrifices which alone can win the war and without which defeat and disaster would be inevitable.

Every man who had a voice in urging war, and who now uses the opportunity of the war to add to his riches, proves conclusively that his patriotism was bogus, that his black heart was all the time giving the lie to his loud voice.

And every man who takes advantage of the people's huge contributions of money and of their nation's urgent necessities to make millions of dishonest dollars while our sons are giving their lives in the shot-swept trenches is a damnable traitor, a disgrace to the name American, and well deserves a traitor's fate.

We cannot understand the hearts and the conduct of men who can plot to make profit out of their own people's peril and sacrifices.

Indeed, such men and their evil hearts and base minds seem incredible to decent folk. Yet they do exist and do plot their infamies.

Here are a dozen of the richest men in the country—all with so much money that they do not know what to do with it, and yet sacrificing their honor and their loyalty in order to rob the government of some more millions during war times.

Here they are securing contracts through the influence of their wealth and the actual position of some of them as representatives of the government; and then making vastly excessive profits out of the government and in addition defaulting on their contracts to the extent of being four months behind in their work, at a time when the government needs shipping most for the maintenance of our soldiers abroad.

. . . . . .

Every war in which America has engaged has been disgraced by these plundering financiers.

There is only one way to deal with this situation, and that is to try all such cases under court martial and to inflict the military penalty for whatever the crime may be.

. . . . . .

From an Editorial in The American of June 11

IT is little more than a month since sensation mongers began crying out bitterly against what they termed the failure of the American shipbuilding programme.

The outcry was noisiest at the beginning of May. And at the beginning of June we got from the Shipping Board the official report that forty-four complete ships, forty-three of them of steel, were turned out from American yards in the last thirty days. In carrying capacity they aggregate 263,571 tons.

By way of eclipsing this came the official report Saturday that in May seventy-one hulls were launched, aggregating 344,450 deadweight tons.

No such record of construction has ever been made in any country. Even Great Britain, the banner nation of the world in the construction of ships, has been at last outdone. The record does not include ships for the navy.

When the Senate was investigating the so-called scandals in shipbuilding operations it was asserted most positively that in 1918 this country would be unable to produce 2,500,000 tons. The records of March, April and May, which show a steady increase of launchings, justify the belief that the year will show a minimum of 4,000,000 tons.

Allowing three hundred working days to the year, this gives an average for American shipyards of one ship of more than 13,000 tons per day. It leaves the submarine hopelessly behind in the race upon which Germany embarked so boastfully.

The figures are worth remembering. They emphasize anew the senselessness of the panic into which Americans fell only a few months ago, because at that time progress in this industry seemed to lag so scandalously.

They suggest the unwisdom, the unpatriotism of hasty attacks upon the Administration based upon insufficient data. The tide in ship construction had just about reached the upward turn when the attacks became most virulent. They have been answered by facts, not by Administration apologies.

. . . . . .